Summer 1947

OUTPOSTS

8

Poems by:

	Page
CLIFFORD DYMENT	1
HARDIMAN SCOTT	1
CHARLES DURANTY	2
G. A. HOLMES	2
DENISE LEVERTOFF	3
ERNEST M. FROST	4
HUGO MANNING	5
ANNE SAXTON	5
WILFRED BARTLETT	6

Poems by:

	Page
ARNOLD VINCENT BOWEN	6
JAMES KIRKUP	7
MARGARET STANLEY-WRENCH	8
JOHN BAYLISS	8
G. A. WAGNER	9
ALFRED GOSSCHALK	10
ARTHUR BALL	10

Article by:

LEONARD CLARK on the work of ANDREW YOUNG — 11

Book Reviews by:

DEREK STANFORD, LIONEL MONTEITH, ALBERT McCARTHY, and the Editor — 15-20

REST IN YOUR ROOM AND ISLAND

CLIFFORD DYMENT

REST in your room and island
O lighthouse of my dark ;
Put out the lamp that hovers
An angel over the wreck.

The terror dies, the night is over.
Now the morning whistles pierce
The storm in the mind where waters
Fondle and the sea ghosts kiss,

And the memory of a friend and music
Cuts a shark's fin over the heart—
The prayer is a failure, heaven
Is blind, the rescuers come late.

O my darling, in your island
Rest with a blessing on your head—
My house and single brilliant window
In a Pacific of solitude.

THE ACTS OF LOVE

HARDIMAN SCOTT

THE acts, the very acts of love themselves
Can lie when tongues alone would speak the truth,
When the untutored heart commands the hours
Of love their utmost minutes run, and delves
The sense of yearning flesh in trembling youth
To vaunt age against the lover's powers,
When lips would never seek the flesh respite
But wake limbs in the crucible of night.

O pure, lovely pure as these acts may be,
What holds the heart beyond love's timeless hour,
What drives the blood to single ecstasy,
Looses to the world this mighty power?
In the lonely confinement of my heart
O seek the truth that makes me learn this part.

LAMENT

CHARLES DURANTY

ANCIENT the curse that scars the stone
And splintered the relics of witch's bone ;
But the lady Ann is young and fair.

The scarecrow flaps his rags at dawn,
Making straw music to a huntsman's horn
As the lady Ann kneels quiet in prayer.

Sea is salt with dead men's tears
While hunger sharps a beggar's fears
Though the lady Ann has pearls to wear.

Across the blind a shadow steals,
The devil thumbs the pack and deals
But the lady Ann has ceased to care,

For Death has breached the castle wall
To choose as partner at the ball
The Lady Ann with flower-decked hair ;
When the midnight revel ends
Death to the maiden, slowly bends,
And laughter floats from the witch's lair.

THE BAT

G. A. HOLMES

AM I then blind, when I dart
At night swiftly across
The line of your vision
And am lost as swiftly in the dark
Moon-shaded division
Between tree and grass ?

You are the blind, who seeing
My shadow on the air
Vanished in passing,
Forget the beauty you were seeking
Lest in repassing
I tangle your hair.

I hung myself at dawn
In a cobwebbed shed
By a railway siding.
A child came lonely at the door,
Threw a stone, deciding
That I was dead.

Yet feared the child to approach
Me vermin, me outcast,
Winged freak of creation.
Half-wit fear ; more in reproach
Than in recreation
The stone was tossed.

I am the shadow of your mind ;
I am of the night-breath
Possessed of the devil :
And now is the power become mine
To mock and bedevil
Blind man, fearing death.

SARNEN

DENISE LEVERTOFF

UNDER the harvest sun the heart
ripens on its wall ;
under the heat of noon the mind
like a leaf is cool.
The angelus and the goatbell
sway across the grass ;
butterflies in blue mid-air
touch and spin apart.
Any attempted dream must fall
to ruin in this light, must pass
before the mocking glance
of idle animals.
There is no need to escape
from the motionless mountain,
there is no need to escape
when here the indifferent lake
accepts a nervous image,
demands no affirmation
of innocence or faith.

LAGO DI COMO

ERNEST M. FROST

THE single boat lies on the eye, unloading fruit
in such a silence that may roast the flashing windows
of this lake's lost kingdom. As mandolines afar
the odours of the fruit tangle the afternoon
where we lie down in water.

Now uttering their oaths
the Alps strike at the clouds ; the only fear
follows their sailing, those finally loved ones, to feast
at the sun's mouth, darkening the town into dull brass.

Where we lie down in water, Italy warms the bones
and waits for the sun to capture all its region
of those airs above the lake. A spider's vine it is
reaching to fill our mouths with the too-early grape
on wires of laziness.

The web grows in the mind
relating love to lethargy of water, and the town
seems like a song that someone meant to sing
in times long past.

Now, at meridian, it lolls upon its sleep
pink under palms, and suddenly from doubt
of the sky's trailing Easter clouds, shouts a wild word
like Love or Death, and no-one sighs or moves ; the sun
is all there is, and in the sun the lake moves, and the rest
is not our caring.

The single boat creeps off, breathes
in the afternoon the yawn, the tedious voyaging from
Switzerland to Como, taking away its tangerines and ice
and sense of movement.

Then the swimmers sleep
and all the map of Italy chequers a sun and rock
each loving each, while in the gaps between
a lizard lies like thought, and then it strikes
strange falling words, like Love or Death or Dream.

WHERE ANOTHER END MAY START

(For Stefan Schimanski)

HUGO MANNING

WHAT new life stirs in the womb of pain
Here in time's empire where another end may start?
O cold, cold is the way of purpose;
Flow blood of words through this frozen plain.

What captive song then will shatter its bars
Before faith and meanings fall apart,
Before our skull may glitter in greater darkness,
Flower and breathe as the white tempest of stars?

Here on the dark hill where our small window may close,
Horror disturbs the dream of the rose.
Wild bird and drum call earth's storm of tears,
Shake the house we have built with corn and fears.

Who will dance then and who will weep?
Before love's wings may break and sleep,
Fall silence on darkness, still music on terror
Over the valley we have chosen in our nameless error.

YOUTH'S MIRACLE

ANN SAXTON

I can hear
The heart and the hour.
I can touch
The hour and the idea

That spring towards me
From hard notes of duty,
And turn the rusted source
Into tomorrow's force.

I can smell
The breath and the hour.
I can see
The hour and the spirit

Turn the angry breaker
Into a soul-maker ;
With men accepting
An adolescent spring.

I shall claim
The World and the hour.
I shall take
The hour and a win.

SEA-BIRD

WILFRED BARTLETT

SEE these spread wings that master a curving wave
Slide up the ice-veined reaches of the sky ;
This wind-shorn wildling, cream upon blue, his brave
Breast fronting a frozen loveliness on high.
And follow his seaward tumble, the bold sweep
Through curdled water cave-down-deep and grim ;
Head delving in hollow, curbing the wave's leap,
Black bead-eyes pricking the midnight under him.

O ponder the sea-bird's poise and venture, on wings
Of faith, eternal avenues of blue,
Fearless of time's steel whip that cracks and stings,
The white-fanged fears straining to fondle you.
Yours is the soul's illimitable space :
The untroubled waters of eternity
Are yours to brood upon. Cleave, with like grace,
Your vaster sky ; cumber your secret sea.

SEA-WIND

ARNOLD VINCENT BOWEN

OUT of the surf you climbed, flung down on the shingle,
The nutty pebbles, sun-spun, firm and fine
Under your smooth, sea-quivering, agonised limbs.
Foam flecked your feet, your hair clung in hyacinth coils
The snakes of Medusa, dripping salt and brightness,
A rough damp towel limp across your loins.

How the sun chiselled you there a sonnet of ivory,
Lapped the salt, left the scent, and your sweet-spare
shimmering form.
The wavelets leaped, and shook all their firetipt javelins
Under the hard blue heaven, and under your eyelids
You saw the amber pavilions sliding, dissolving
In convolute colours the very cave of Merlin.

It was the naked wind that snatched your raiment
Away, away—down, down to the dancing waters,
Left you to dazzle the thirsting eyes of Heaven.
Now, after all these long years, a gust of chance wind
Returns me, like fire, the shuddering revelation
So charged with anguish, the seeds fly singing again.

HALLUCINATION

JAMES KIRKUP

THE dark paths of the summer garden
frozen white in green canals of yew,
the tree-spanned distances of the extended lawn,
the brown lake immobilized beneath the grey
cloche of the concentrated sky.

These things behind the air-woven curtain
of the gradual snow
remain familiar, but changed with stillness
like a well-known face grown strange and cold
in mortal sickness.

Boughs roughly defined by snow
and narrowed trunks now seem unnaturally light,
brightened theatrically from below
like footlit dancers posed ethereal in flight,
each with a bird imprisoned in his throat.

Seen from his snowlit eyes,
the prisoner, deep-staring from his lonely window,
feels it is not snow that falls ;
but the entire house, and he
himself that seem to rise.

LONDON STARLINGS AT DUSK

MARGARET STANLEY-WRENCH

NOW, when the light first leaves these London squares,
And shadows are blue as sloes darkened by frost,
And up the flanks of buildings one by one
The lights come on, glowing like eyes behind
The spray of branches, circling overhead
Come starlings home to roost in tangled skeins
A pattern against the pewter London sky,
As if to the forest that was before the city.

From tree to tree they go, restless and rustling,
And branches seem thick with leaves as they are in summer
Bending with weight of fruit, till suddenly
Trees are changed to birds, and every leaf
Has wings and is voluble with the sibilant
Voice of water, till on cornice and pediment,
And jostling over the sooty architrave
A moving frieze has spread, and all night long
Tremulously twittering, half sleeping
Deceived by the false dawn of the pallid lamps,
So the late traveller in the empty streets,
Or the lovers in the chasm of shadow hear
As echo of the country, as if the walls
Of stone were walls of trees, the distant hum
Of trains a brook hidden in depth of woods,
And the primeval forest back again.

SONNETS

JOHN BAYLISS

I

AMID this darkness there is still the rose
to light the shadows of my silent room,
as fresh and lovely as its tender fellows
along the dark branch by an April stream.
For like the wild-rose and those rarer flowers
that live in green perfection in the west
she takes her beauty, delicate in air,
yet has a longer date than they to last.

Her hair in darkness smells like daffodils'
rainswept by the spring winds, her lips are fresh
as first wild strawberries in early woods,
her dress like bluebell haze among the trees.
She is not here. The dry winds blow my words.
Yet still her flowers shall hold my memory.

II

Grief has no answer in this wilderness.
Its echo dulls. It cannot pierce the dark.
And memory can lose a lovely face
as mirrors do when owners do not look.
So even she, for whom the alien flowers
provide their setting and this room its light,
by her own absence breaks all happiness
and makes this country blacker than the night.

For still through Season's change her lovely head
has lain beyond the shadow of my grief,
and her gay heart has shared with solitude
the separate love which scars beyond belief.
All things shall pass when she returns to me
except our love and her intenser beauty.

POEM

G. A. Wagner

WHO, lost
In fortunate oblivion, will count our cost,
Or bear to face
The dialectics of our time and space?

They're few
Who'll know what century's face is true,
Or care
For the song of the girl with weeping hair.

Who for answer
Will disturb the voice of summer,
Or for reply
Trouble the waters of the noon sky?

STRONG THE BLOOD AND DEEP THE DANGER

Alfred Gosschalk

STRONG the blood and deep the danger;
Wounds of our like streams meander
Leisurely across the meadows
Given up to lush delights.

Easy now to sail our navy
Grandly on these waters, hoping
Madly that it, sanely riding,
Safe will come to anchorage.

Meadows given up in bondage
To narcisstic, sun-soaked pleasures,
Do not lightly yield their passions,
Rather tear our craft to pieces.

Danger lies in flower fingers
Fragile bulkheads crushing, spilling
Paper entrails in these waters,
Beauty's muscles tensed for killing.

Building as we do outside us
Veins through which our dreams extensive
From the heart may grow, meadow
Langour fades in anger, still

May bring, unless we're lucky, naval
Grief upon our wishes (high the
Craft and dry the blood) leaving
All things to be done in heaven.

THE HOUSE OF EXILE

Arthur Ball

THEY left their croft, and went to a richer land.
Now their grandchildren move and speak and travel
As cosmopolitans. But this one strand
Of the past's white hair gleams when a kind wind's blowing.
It is the croft that's exiled, time is showing
A monument in deserts not of sand.

ANDREW YOUNG

LEONARD CLARK

IT IS a curious feature of the present materialistic age that a great deal of poetry is being written, published and read. The spread of popular education, the determination to be individual in a standardised community, the sense of revolt against the various oppressions, the thirst for the good and the beautiful at a time when these are in danger of being only dimly recognised, and the reaching out to the unexplored regions of man's mind and spirit, are some of the reasons for this phenomenon. Dragons' teeth are sown overnight, and poets and publishers arise on all sides in the morning.

One of the results of such poetical activity is that the general reader is finding it increasingly difficult to distinguish from the true and the false in poetry. In an age so confused as our own we have to be constantly on guard against influences which, however attractive and temporarily stimulating, must be ranged alongside the values which have a more permanent nature. It is necessary to do this in order to ensure that our own high standards of criticism are maintained. As writers and readers of poetry we must keep our balance.

During this century, as in other centuries, the stream of English poetry has borne upon its waters, many new and strange boats. Some of these have capsized with all hands, others are still sailing on with their opposing pennants to different destinations. There have been, among others, the surrealists, the dadaists, the imagists, the apocalyptics, the resurrected metaphysicals, the hidebound traditionalists. None of these will survive in themselves as separate identities, but all of them have in various ways affected, and will for some time continue to effect, the ultimate direction of the stream. Our age has produced poetry of a high order, but it has also produced much more that is insincere or merely imitative. Its beliefs owe much to the teaching of Marx, Freud, and Darwin. What men think today is largely due to the results which have followed such historical happenings as the disappearance of a rigid system of feudalism and an unquestioned acceptance of a cosmic order, the English Reformation, the decay of patronage, the industrial revolution and the rise of political socialism. Much of the poetry which has been written in this age has been directly influenced by the technical and poetical beliefs held by Donne, Blake, Wordsworth, Whitman, Hopkins and Housman. In addition, English poetry has been affected by the work of Rimbaud, Verlaine, Eluard, Rilke, Hölderlin and Lorca.

Nevertheless there are a number of living poets who have never allowed themselves to be seduced from the main and undiluted stream of English poetry. They have certainly experimented and sometimes changed their styles, but their idiom has remained. In all cases these poets have set a course and followed it, they have made a special province of one aspect of living, and they have matured. Blunden, de la Mare, Masefield, Robert Frost, Dorothy Wellesley, Herbert Palmer, Sassoon, Victoria Sackville-West, Bottomley, and Andrew Young are such poets. These have never sacrificed themselves to the dictates of passing fashion, to an artificially engendered popularity, or to ideas which should lie outside the scope of poetry. They are the remnants of the much abused " Georgians." Day Lewis and Spender seem to be joining their ranks, the latest fledglings are Henry Reed and Patric Dickinson ; Dylan Thomas at his greatest is always coherent. The former arch-rebel, Eliot, has already become a classic.

Andrew Young is one of the most interesting of these poets. He belongs in literature to the pastoral company of Clare, Shenstone. Stephen Duck, Herrick, Hardy, Bloomfield, Frost, Edward Thomas and W. H. Davies. He is a minor poet as all these—with the probable exception of Hardy and Herrick—are minor poets. He is greater than Clare, Shenstone, Duck, Bloomfield, Frost and Davies, largely because he is better educated. With Herrick, Hardy, and Thomas, he is destined for a small place in the anthologies of immortality, but that place is assured. He will never have a wide popular appeal because his range is small and his art a fastidious one.

Andrew Young is a Scot. He was born in Elgin in 1885 and was educated at Edinburgh University. Ordained to the Ministry of the Church of Scotland, he later entered the Church of England and lives now in Kent, sharing that county poetically with Victoria Sackville-West. His first books of poetry were published in almost a private way : fifteen years ago the work of Andrew Young was unknown except to a handful of intimate friends. Then came *Winter Harvest*, published by the Nonesuch Press and this showed that he had the promise of becoming one of the purest and most graceful poets of the century. There followed *The White Blackbird* of which a distinguished critic wrote : " If awareness is the touchstone of poetry today then few poets have it so truly and in such high degree as Mr. Andrew Young." In 1936, Jonathan Cape published his *Collected Poems* and a year later his poetic drama *Nicodemus*. He began to appear in contemporary anthologies, his work was broadcast, critical works on poetry mentioned his name. His last published work of poems was *Speak to the Earth* which appeared in 1939. Now for a poet aged 60 this is a slender enough output, but a poet is not judged on output alone. It is interesting to compare the amount of work pub-

lished by the Rev. George Crabbe at this stage with that published by the Rev. Andrew Young, both of them country parsons.

In 1945, Andrew Young's prose book *A Prospect of Flowers*, the counterpart of his poems, was sold out almost on publication and is now one of the most difficult books to procure second-hand. This book revealed not only his extraordinary and detailed knowledge of rare plants but also an intimacy with many of the unknown corners of England. When its closely packed though economical information is considered, it is not surprising to learn that this book took him four years to write. Andrew Young is now engaged on another book dealing with wild plants ; he is also writing a long escatological poem. As a naturalist he bears comparison, though in a small way, with Hudson, White and Jefferies. As a poet he is that rare combination, as Tennyson was, of a nature poet whose subject matter is scientifically correct. But because " he has the reality to the most sensitive point of vision, and a poet's imagination to make it more real to those who themselves have missed the point," Andrew Young is a greater artist than the finicky Clare or the over-simplified Bloomfield.

He has a passion for the truth in poetry and he seals the record of his observations of the natural world in language which is as carefully fashioned and severely disciplined as the fronds of a fern or the convolutions of a sea shell. His poetry is so sensitive and finely drawn that one is instantly aware when reading it that one is looking over the shoulder of an etcher. He is, in fact, a superb miniaturist in poetry, as Jane Austen is a miniaturist in prose. The poems, however, range over a wide field of the natural world to which he has restricted himself. A glance, for instance, at the contents of *Speak to the Earth* shows that he has written about moles and mountains, housemartins and frogs, fields of asparagus, waterfalls and violets. It is like being taken on an 18th century expedition and seeing the green fields of England all shining and new again. It is like holding the childlike hand of William Blake. Like de la Mare, he is pre-occupied with cloaking mists and half-heard silences, and like Wordsworth with soft inland murmurs. Andrew Young seems most at home on lonely hillsides where the grey walls and the un-metalled tracks are his only company, or in the shadowy forests where the stockdoves and ruined chapels are. Here he is a true romantic. On the downs and pilgrims' roads he peers through the mists to see the round barrows, the solitary ploughman and the blowing thistle-down. He makes these silences more silent for us ; he creates their atmosphere in a most subtle manner. Out of the mists and silences

he quietly draws the most powerful and yet most obvious images. He dangles a single feather before our eyes and sets singing a whole forest of trembling birds, he points to a single star over a pine tree and a long winter night is upon us, he holds one glow-worm in nis hand and our heads are full of fire. The click of the elm-beetle, and the whole orchestra of field and hedgerow is alive. Andrew Young wanders by the remotest of sea shores where the dead crabs and the purple sea stock are, and through the moonlight he makes us look at the towering chalk cliffs and the sleeping dunes. He is, in short, the most suggestive of poets. It is because he is such a skilful craftsman that he awakens our imaginations.

His economy in language reminds one of the disciplines of Hardy and that is why it is difficult to quote adequately from his poems. As he is a lyrical poet who uses ancient forms his vignettes should be read in their entirety. He does not overload his poems but has the courage to discard what might be called the " rubble " of language. Andrew Young does not confuse the readers by moving his kaleidoscope too rapidly. This is because he builds his poems round a single poetic idea, often an unusual idea, but one whose clarity and truth are not blurred for us. He does not often combine dissimilar and opposing images or ideas. He dignifies words by his simple use of them, rediscovering for us their strength and original beauty, and this is why he is such a finished artist.

But he is not merely a modern realist or a naturalist writing delicate nature poetry. In his quiet and unassuming way he is a philosopher whose faith is essentially Christian and English, tolerant and not autocratic. He puts forward no new, world-shaking ideas, but re-asserts old and proven values in a new and challenging manner. At the same time his poetry is modest and free from bigotry. He is like Wordsworth's violet by a mossy stone, and one does not compare the violet with orchid, or the wren with the parrakeet. He is Couperin rather than Berlioz, Grieg rather than Sibelius. His architecture is that of the sea-anemone rather than that of the Parthenon. For these reasons, the work of Andrew Young is a refreshing study and enjoyment in a world that is fast silencing the simple pleasures of men, and will not stay to listen to the tinkling mountain streams or to the tiny pipings of the solitary redbreast.

Living in Time :Kathleen Raine (Nicholson & Watson) 6s. od.
Aegean Islands : Bernard Spencer (Nicholson & Watson) 6s. od.

"ROMANTICISM is spilt religion," remarked the thinker, T. E. Hulme. Religion is spilt passion, one may well answer, reading the second volume of poems by the author of *Stone and Flower*. Setting out from a point of personal bereavement, Miss Kathleen Raine records in these pages the journeys of a mystic in search of God, the efforts of a mind to transcend sorrow and sublimate its sense of loss. There is certainly a quantum of feeling in this book: some of the most intensely felt poems one may discover anywhere today:

> " The words of lovers die upon my lips,
> For I am only one and you another
> Intangible commotion of the winds,
> I speak, you listen, and our end is silence."

Three or four diamond lyrics of grief: put that in the scale against certain loose pieces, flawed, it would seem by uncontrolled excitement; and let the reader make his decision.

Mr. Bernard Spencer, the author of *Aegean Islands*, a well-produced book of thirty-eight poems, was one of Geoffrey Grigson's first camera-men; one of the poets of the *New Verse Anthology* noted for their snap-shot vision of life. This poetry of pictorial statistics went out of fashion with Mass Observation, and many of its early partisans have been lost count of or re-emerged in the more restful field of politics. Mr. Spencer is one of the few who does not deserve to be forgotten.

Along with the other poets of this group, he has learnt to match keen sight with clear phrase. One pleasantly misses, however, in his verse that note of over-slick reportage which sometimes hall-marked the writing of this school as the poetry of meretricious journalistic minds. A quality unique to Mr. Spencer is a flair for the thoughtfully modulated phrase; and his verse, low-pitched, with few soaring passages, possesses the timbre of slow considered speech:

> " And it may be, too, that we are born with some nostalgia
> to make the migration of sails
> and wings a crying matter."

The poems in this volume are divided into two sections: those composed before 1940, dealing mainly with the home pre-war; and

those that were written between 1940 and 1942, concerned with Egypt and the Aegean.

DEREK STANFORD

Road from Delavan: Maurice Browne (Cyril Edwards) 6s. 6d.

A refreshing departure from the usual collection, *Road from Delavan* is a long poem in four parts. It is a chronicle of personal philosophy, meandering through thirty years and six thousand miles to an ultimate crystallization. The poet sees, at once, the personal and the cosmic ; his own love and the universe ; and one cannot escape the compelling emotive qualities which his verse engenders. His subtle introduction of the antithetical-self to defeat all reticence is a telling device. Direct and simple, Mr. Browne's style yet possesses a turn of phrase original enough to maintain appeal in the less significant passages. This slender volume is a production of quality and one which I recommend.

LIONEL MONTEITH

Outlaw of the Lowest Planet: Kenneth Patchen (Grey Walls Press) 8s. 6d.

THIS first collection of Mr. Patchen's poetry to be published in England is well selected. Mr. Patchen is undoubtedly one of the greatest figures in modern literature, and because of this, he suffers more misrepresentation than most. His poetry is violent, romantic and impulsive—the torrential outpouring of a sensitive mind revolted by the cruelty of our era. His scorn for the madmen who have dragged us through two wars in the space of a quarter century, and are already preparing another, is aptly expressed in a number of poems, notably in *The Lions of Fire*, one of the most powerful pieces in the book.

Mr. Patchen is capable of the most tender lyric. A number included here rank with the finest during the last decade. However, it is when he comments upon the insanity of existence today that his full stature is revealed. He is a great humanist. If his writing appears hysterical at times it is because hysteria is inevitably engendered by an objective scrutiny of the world at the present time. One senses the agony which he feels when he sees humanity rushing, at breakneck speed, towards its own destruction. The solution is so simple and yet we blindly reject it. Until a man feels instinctive love for all other men he hardly deserves to survive. The criticism that Mr. Patchen

stands aside and does nothing to help the oppressed is so fantastic that one can only believe it to be made by followers of political parties whose conception of sympathy is an acceptance of their own dogmas. On one page we find *Heine Lived in Germany* and *Nice Day for a Lynching*, far greater social commentaries than the scribblings of our own 'leftists' now so busily rushing to be heard on the B.B.C. Third Programme.

All who still retain a spark of faith in humanity will not fail to be moved by this selection from the work of a great man and a great poet. David Gascoyne's introduction is both incorrect and pointless.

ALBERT MCCARTHY

A Sword in the Desert: Herbert Palmer (George G. Harrap & Co.) 6s. od.
Rain: Jean Kenward (W. H. Allen & Co.) 3s. 6d.
The Planet in my Hand: Ruthven Todd (Grey Walls Press) 6s. od.
The Night Loves Us: Louis Adeane (The Delphic Press) 3s. 6d.
Salute to Greece: Raymond Tong (The Delphic Press) 1s. 6d.

MR. Herbert Palmer is no longer a young man, but he still retains a youthful virility (and, one might add, provocativeness) in both his poetry and prose. In his recent volume, *A Sword in the Desert*, a collection of the work of the last 10 years, together with the revised versions of a few earlier poems, he leads off with a challenging essay on *The Present State of English Poetry*, in which he makes some sapient observations on the cliquishness, and log-rolling of the literary world today. As a poet and critic, he has many interesting things to say, so it is all the more unfortunate that he should allow his indignation and impatience too loose a rein when speaking of his contemporaries. One can be excused for quoting him his own words:

> "Set a latch upon your mind
> When Life and Anger meet,
> Lest your reason turn to rind
> And the lightning lame your feet."

Despite his vigorous criticism, Mr. Palmer is a traditionalist in the best sense of the word—too often it implies prejudice, intolerance and lack of vision. If he tends to be depreciative of modern poetry in general, he has an open mind and the ability to recognise real quality in the particular; he was one of the first of the established critics to

praise the work of David Gascoyne, although this poet is decidely modern and has been influenced by surrealism. And he is not afraid to emphasise the point that " if poetry is to attract or endure it cannot be the lifeless image of another poet's verse . . . "

His book is divided into three sections; the first lyrical and visionary, the second mainly satirical, and the third, in Mr. Palmer's own words, " a barrel-organ to play a few tunes after the blaze." There can be no doubt that all these poems were " written with the speaking voice and for the listening ear." A few of the war efforts creak a little as though specially written for occasions, but with *Patriots* and *Some Bombers* the true poetic vision is restored. Amongst the poems destined for anthologies are *The Wounded Hawk*, *Allegory of Pilgrimage*, *Christmas Signs*, *Spring Song*, and *Apocalypse*. The poet's sensitivity and his deep feeling for nature are evident throughout the volume ; most refreshingly in *Brook Nostalgia* :

" Forget, forget—where alder roots cling wet.
Where water runs I can a year forget.
The empty brain grows pleasuring ears and eyes.

See, watch, suspend. Just that, and gild my nose,
Mindless as hern or otter, in the sun's throes,
Where rock-moss drips, where water gleams and flows."

There are many other poems equally worthy of quotation, but readers should buy the book for themselves and select their own.

Those readers who enjoyed Miss Jean Kenward's *Fool's Song* and *Envoy* in earlier issues of OUTPOSTS will find much more to attract them in her first slim volume. She is one of the few young poets who achieve both the modern freshness of diction and the traditional sense of discipline and form. Her book can be opened at any page and the same felicity of language, the same lightness of rhythm, the same perception can be found : -

" And the heart of the river, pounding
Drowsily like a tiger,
Rumples the wave in a flower
Petal over your shoulder."

Often she verges upon sentimentality yet always, with the happy turn of a phrase, averts the danger and uses the opportunity to exhibit

her dexterity with words. Admittedly, there is no great depth of thought, but that may come with maturity.

It is a real pleasure in these days to find a book of poems so well produced as *The Planet in my Hand* by Mr. Ruthven Rodd. What is more important is that the pleasure is sustained in reading the contents. Here is a more balanced and mature mind at work, a poet whose private experience has enabled him to probe beneath the surface without bitterness or cynicism. In some of the poems there is a looseness of expression which detracts from the general poetic tension, but one cannot help feeling his sincerity when he says, characteristically:

> " O Love, I would ask little of tomorrow
> If, for today, I could forget the sorrow
> Of the unnamed."

The subtlety and lyrical tenderness of the love poems mark him out as an accomplished poet, but it is the remarkable series of sonnet-portraits which raises him head and shoulders above most of his contemporaries. These portraits include Arthur Rimbaud, Jonathan Swift, Franz Kafka, Henry Fuseli, Herman Melville, William Blake, Paul Klee, Edward Calvert and John Clare; all of them are penetrating studies and deserve more attention than can be given them here:

> " Larger than all the rest, he stood alone,
> And round his feet crowded the small world;
> Sometimes, for a moment, his giant fingers curled
> Around some incident, moulding it in stone."
>
> (*Herman Melville*)

A glance at Mr. Adeane's titles suggests that he inclines towards romanticism and the 32 lyrics in his volume confirm this impression. His poems, if not so robust as those of Mr. Palmer, are certainly more polished; perhaps they are over-polished. At times, one feels that he deliberately restraining his emotional power in the interests of technical proficiency (a gentle dose of Kenneth Patchen might be prescribed). Nevertheless, there is a pleasing craftsmanship underlying the whole of his work, and his use of assonance and alliteration is remarkably effective. He is at his best when least self-conscious, as in the lyric *To Woman*:

> " Yours is perhaps that face the hero dreamed
> Just before sleep immortalised his day,

The angel grief whose easy welcome seemed
To compass him towards the point where lay
—Hub of his life and legend of the world—
The golden flower in a metal land."

Salute to Greece, by Mr. Raymond Tong, is a small collection of poems inspired by his love for the country where he spent several months with the R.A.F. Whilst it is a distinct improvement on his first book, published over two years ago, there is some evidence of carelessness. Mr. Tong was concerned with the problem of pain at an early age, and it was almost inevitable that his wartime experience in Greece should create a vivid impression upon his emotional temperament and strengthen his own interpretation of the classical renewal myth. This belief is the theme of his most outstanding poem to date, *Death of a Partisan.*

HOWARD SERGEANT

Modern Reading No. 14 : Edited by Reginald Moore (Phoenix House) 6s. od.

AS a cloth bound quarterly book, Mr. Reginald Moore's celebrated *Modern Reading* enters a new phase. Imperative of study by the littérateur, it is, once more, a miscellany which the general reader will find engrossing.

American authors are well represented and, in a new feature, *Writers and Their Work*, Lewis Gannett and Henry Miller contribute commendable articles on John Steinbeck and Gustav Theodor Fechner respectively. But, unfortunately, Fechner's *Life After Death* involves issues demanding more space than Henry Miller's article has been allowed. A more questionable new feature is "Excerpts from *Books to Come.*" Competently handled by Mr. Moore, its obvious limitations call for the utmost circumspection in choice. *The Unresolved Antonio*, by Ronald Mason, is a highly interpretive essay embossing the significance of *The Tempest* as Shakespeare's last play.

Frank O'Connor's understanding of people and their more amusing weaknesses, T. O. Beachcroft's sense of the dramatic, Sylvia Townsend Warner's penetrating humour, Walter Allen's sapient characterization, and Jessamyn West's unusual approach, all go to the making of stories which are delightful in themselves.

. Add to that some dozen poems, selected with conservatism but good taste ; a beautifully produced photo-section of Mediaevel Chantry Chapels, and you have *Modern Reading No.* 14—a volume which should not be missed.

LIONEL MONTEITH